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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

ORIGINAL DATE 2/19/07

SPONSOR Begaye LAST UPDATED _____ HB HJM 23

SHORT TITLE Navajo Talker Postage Stamp SB _____

ANALYST Weber

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY07	FY08		
	NFI		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

LFC Files

Responses Received From
Indian Affairs Department (IAD)

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

House Joint Memorial 23 is an opportunity to honor the activities of the World War II Navajo Code Talkers and to request that the United States Post Office issue a postage stamp commemorating their heroic efforts.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

No Fiscal Impact

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

The Indian Affairs Department contributes the following background information.

HJM 23 provides a mechanism for adding New Mexico's voice to the choir of supporters advocating for a postage stamp commemorating the heroic efforts of the Navajo Code Talkers during World War II. The Code Talkers served the war effort in a vital manner, enabling the United States to establish a means of conveying intelligence in the Pacific Theater that was indecipherable to the intrepid Japanese code-breakers. The Navajo Code Talkers took part in

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every assault the U.S. Marines conducted in the Pacific from 1942 to 1945. They served in all six Marine divisions, Marine Raider battalions and Marine parachute units. At Iwo Jima, Major Howard Connor, 5th Marine Division signal officer, declared, "Were it not for the Navajos, the Marines would never have taken Iwo Jima."

In 1942, there were approximately 50,000 Navajo tribal members. As of 1945, about 540 of those tribal members served as Marines. From 375 to 420 of those Navajo Marines trained as Code Talkers; the rest served in other capacities. The Code Talkers have subsequently been recognized for their historic achievements. On December 22, 2000, the federal *Honoring the Navajo Code Talkers Act* was signed into law, authorizing the President of the United States to award each of the original twenty-nine Navajo Code Talkers a gold medal and a silver medal to other Navajo men who later qualified as Navajo Code Talkers.

Navajo tribal members made these historic contributions despite being subjected to mistreatment back in the United States. Ironically, at the very same time that the United States exploited the complex Navajo language to further its intelligence efforts, it simultaneously sought to discourage its use back at home. The devotion and patriotism demonstrated by these Navajos despite this sobering context speaks volumes about the extraordinary men known as the Code Talkers.

MW/csd